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ABSTRACT

The Program for Learning in Accordance with Needs (PLAN) was incorporated into the Washington-Carver Community School in Muncie, Indiana in 1973 as a computer management system for individualized learning. The school is located in a low socioeconomic neighborhood with a population of 600 students identified as low achievers. Language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies were the major content areas in this curriculum designed for kindergarten through sixth grade. Data from interviews, questionnaires, and standardized test scores were gathered during the 1973-74 and 1974-75 school years to determine whether the following major program objectives were met: (1) stimulate students to an average of one grade level's growth per year; (2) to encourage students to come to conclusions in the affective domain; (3) to develop a media center which facilitates variations in learning styles; and (4) to involve parents in decision-making activities. In addition to academic assessment, two instruments were constructed to measure student self-concept. Results indicate that students surpassed the test author's expectations in both the 1974 and 1975 school years; that students achieved one grade level's growth per year; and that PLAN is a viable alternative school. Increased inservice training for PLAN teachers was recommended, as well as the use of criterion referenced achievement tests. (JAC)

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PLAN*: ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL OR FAD OF THE SEVENTIES

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Viable alternative schools are returning to monolithic approaches in spite of evidence for their unprecendented ability to stimulate desirable changes in pupil behavior in the social and academic school arenas. One successful alternative model within the public school system has existed in the form of PLAN* (Program for Learning in Accordance with Needs), a clerical management system designed by Westinghouse Learning Corporation in conjunction with The American Institutes for Research. However, the few thousand students who have experienced the computer-managed individualized instruction program during the past four years, may well be the only students to ever have the option to do so. Its demise will not be due to students' failure to learn, their poor behavior or disinterest in school, but instead will be pressured into nonexistence by educators, who are maintaining antiquated perspectives of the purpose and scope of evaluation and accountability.

Alternative elementary schools made their appearance in 1969-1970 with grass-roots level beginnings. Either parents or educators became dissatisfied with a specific community of education and attempted to redefine instructional activities and expectations. As alternative schools in general have

been developed to meet specific rather than universal needs, limited communication has occurred among models. However, common characteristics have evolved by change through the nature of design: (1) the general goal of alternative programs have remained similar to their traditional counterparts, that being the promotion of equal opportunity to succeed and reap the rewards of cultural success, (2) alternative programs have incorporated teaching and learning styles which have focused on meeting the instructional needs of individual students, (3) social and emotional growth has been emphasized as well as accounted for in planning the curriculum, (4) teachers and students, as well as parents could opt out of participation in the alternative model, (5) initial funding provided materials and equipment not readily available in traditional counterparts, (6) governmental and foundation funding agencies required formative and summative reports on affective and cognitive growth. Consequently, programs were often sequentially and systematically reviewed, (7) an attempt to consider parent commitment as a major contributing component was made, and (8) a less desirable characteristic on alternative schools have had in common included a focus on social, intellectual, racial or economic minority groups. To some degree funding has promoted this trait.

Educational fads have been included, discussed, modified and discarded within many of the programs. The terms open-concept, team-teaching, humanistic and individualized

teaching instruction have been continually redefined. In spite of good intentions, success of newer concepts was most often defeated from the beginning due to lack of understanding of purpose and/or intentional partial implementation.

Westinghouse Learning Corporation developed PLAN* as an alternative individualized instruction model. PLAN* was not conceived at the grass-roots level, nor was it designed for a minority population of students. It was developed by education industrialists who identified a need for the coordination of teaching and learning materials within a management system in order to promote effective individualized instruction. PLAN* as utilized in the elementary school is a computer-management system for individualizing a learning program consisting of four content areas designed for grade levels K through six. Language arts, mathematics, science and social studies are the major components within the curriculum. PLAN* uses curriculum guides and existing instructional materials. PLAN* was designed to provide the arrangement of resources and instructional materials in learning packets as well as the management of records for deciding individual student's program of studies.

The defined responsibility of the computer element of the program included the following three components: (1) to score tests, (2) to record each student's progress, and (3) to prescribe a Program of Studies based on the student's progress. The projected function of the computer would include material being submitted on each pupil to the computer each day and a

printout would become available for use by teachers and pupils the following morning.

One community which elected to incorporate PLAN* into an alternative school was Muncie, Indiana. The Muncie Community Schools accepted a three year grant of $80,000 from ESEA, Title III, through the Indiana Department of Public Instruction to facilitate individualized instruction in the Washington-Carver Community School. Established as an innovative program, several new concepts in education were combined to compliment computer-management. The elementary school was housed in a new building with open construction. Open-classroom areas were to be maintained among designated groups. Secondly, team-teaching and an informal differentiated staff approach was to be used. The latter included teacher-aides, student-teachers and college-laboratory students.

Method

Subjects. As the school population consisted of pupils who were identified as low achievers and informally specified as potential problems to society, the major goals of the program were (1) to stimulate pupils to an average of one grade level's growth per year as measured by standard achievement tests, (2) to cause students to consider alternatives and come to conclusions in the affective domain, (3) to develop a media center to facilitate consideration of variations in learning styles, and (4) to involve parents in decision-making activities.

A PLAN* curriculum is developed around instructional objectives stated in behavioral terms. The objectives have a strong cognitive orientation and few affective objectives are to be found. The broad goal objectives of PLAN* are expected to lead to affective behavioral outcomes. The instructional objectives which determine the curriculum content and modes of transaction with the content and materials tend to be highly cognitive and skill oriented.

During each of the 1973,74 and 75 school years, approximately 600 pupils were enrolled in the Muncie PLAN* program. The students came in contact with sixty to seventy adults on a daily basis. The school was established as a community school within a low socioeconomic neighborhood. The majority of the students were first generation Hoosiers with heritages in Appalachia. Approximately fifteen percent of the students were Black. Although students were assigned to this school based on living boundaries, parents and students could opt for transfer to other more traditional neighborhood schools with similar populations of students. After the first year it was noted that isolated cases of parents were giving false addresses in order to see that their child was enrolled in the school.

Instruments. Standardized test data for measuring cognitive growth were collected through both the Metropolitan Achievement Test and the Iowa Tests of Basic skills in the 1973-74 school year and through the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in the 1974-75 school year (these tests were required by the central office administration for comparative purposes

throughout the district containing twenty-two elementary schools). No other cognitive growth scores were available.

Systematic interviews and questionnaires were designed to collect data from pupils, teachers, administrators and parents on implementation and attainment of general and specific program objectives. Further, teacher records, parent/visitor checklists, and parent/teacher conference reports were designed to collect data for evaluation purposes.

Two instruments were constructed to collect data on the change in pupil self-concept. "The Observation of Group Self-Concept Schedule" and the "How I am at School--Self-Report" were field tested as well as conceptually and statistically analyzed to produce coefficients of reliability and validity. The data collection format for the observation schedule was through the placement of each indicator on a five-point continum with positive and negative descriptors at either end. The thirty-one indicators were factor analyzed to determine their support to the construct of self-concept. The self-report instrument was designed by writing a first person statement in behavioral terms relating to each item of the observation schedule. The terms "always," "sometimes," and "never" were selected for student responses.

Procedure. The paradigm for data collection on evidence of cognitive growth involved the administration and scoring of achievement tests during the eighth month of the school year. These results were presented in terms of standardized distributions and further analyzed for mean gain scores of

designated pupil groups. Each designated group of pupils, teachers, aides and building administrators were simultaneously administered questionnaires designed to show the extent to which program goals had been achieved. The data were presented in nominal and percentage basis.

Data on self-concept was collected as follows: five pairs of trained observers rated each of three pupil groups in each grade level. Independent pairs of observers rated a group simultaneously for twenty minutes. Interrater reliability estimates were calculated. Total sums, means and standard deviations of projected face factors and maximum and minimum scores were reported for each indicator on the observation schedule with reference to designated pupil groups.

Analysis of self-report data included mean scores and standard deviations of content factors and related standard errors of the mean, test-retest reliability coefficients, summary of analysis of variance in pupil self-report change and factor analysis using both orthogonal and oblique rotations.

Results and Discussion

Cognitive. The test scores of 52 third grade pupils showed a mean gain of six months in reading and five months in math. Based on the test scores of 93 fourth grade pupils, a composite of one year's growth was attained. Eighty fifth grade pupils achieved a composite ten month gain and 83 sixth grade pupils obtained a composite ten month gain.

Using the scores of all third graders in the 1975 testing, the pupil growth averaged one-half of the expected growth. The composite placement was 3.0 while the norm for all third

graders would be 3.7 or seven months beyond the sampled third grade pupil. Fourth grade pupils surpassed the full years expectancy growth by two months. The composite grade placement was 3.7 while the norm for all fourth graders nationally would be 4.7. While the fourth graders made a year's growth, they started a year a grade level below the norm. They did not fall further behind as would be predicted.

Fifth grade pupils achieved a normal ten month gain with a composite placement of 4.5. However, the norm for all fifth graders nationally would be 5.7 or a year and two months beyond the sampled fifth graders. Again, these students did not fall further behind as would be predicted in normal circumstances.

Sixth grade pupils averaged an eleven month gain. The sixth graders composite placement was 5.7 while the norm for all sixth graders nationally was 6.7 or a year higher than the sampled sixth graders.

As a total group, fewer of the third, fourth, fifth and sixth grade pupils scored above the fiftieth percentile in 1975 than in 1974. Test scores of groups of pupils in this student population in previous years indicated that the mean gain score decreased with each superceding grade level. Consequently, fewer students within the population scored above the fiftieth percentile in higher grade levels. Individual students would have had to achieved at least a 20 month composite gain score in order to show an increase in the number of test scores above the fiftieth percentile. One

cognitive objective was stated: The percentage of pupils above the fiftieth percentile on national norms on standardized tests will be increased by 25% during the first year.

When the teachers in grades one through six were queried about the computer-management component of Muncie PLAN*, the responses were less than enthusiastic. The majority of the teachers reported that the record system kept by the computer informed them less than one-half of the specified time about the individual student's overall program and one-half the time on specific information about the balance of the individual student's program. Three-fourths of the teachers judged that the computer system kept the pupils well informed about their own general progress in each subject area and in a manner that students could understand less than 10% of the time. A major complaint teachers voiced about the computer system was that when material on students was submitted it was often rejected unnecessarily for undetermined or inaccurate reasons and further that printouts were often not available in time for use. All teachers reported the necessity of keeping their own record systems in order to have some dependable record which they could rely on a day-to-day basis.

With reference to the Program of Studies (POS), approximately one-half of the teachers judged that it was possible to consider both the student's special interest within a subject area and the student's learning style about 75% of the time. However, when intermediate students were asked how they knew what to do each day, they reported that the teachers told them what to do.

The teaching-learning units (TLU's) are to serve a dual purpose of directing the instructional process serving as instructional materials. Sixty-seven percent of the teachers judged that the TLU's were most adequate for most students in the area of mathematics and seventy-five percent of the intermediate pupils interviewed reported that math was their favorite subject.

Twenty-two percent of the teachers judged that the reading TLU's were the most adequate learning units for most students. Fifty percent of all teachers judged that the social study TLU's were the least adequate for most students.

The majority of teachers reported that their students spent approximately fifty percent of their learning time on TLU's and the remainder of the time on related learning activities. The majority of the teachers stated that they spent between twenty-five and fifty percent of their instructional time assisting with TLU's and the duration of the time developing and conducting learning activities in coordination with the TLU's.

When students were asked about the interest level of the reading material connected with the TLU's, approximately sixty percent of the students reported that most or all of the time the reading material in all of the subject areas contained interesting information.

Sixty-five percent of the students reported that during the school day, most or all the students were involved with the same learning experiences at the same time. One-half of

the teachers reported that students actually worked independently of other students twenty-five to fifty percent of the time. The latter response was descriptive of designated groups in the primary grades.

The majority of students further reported that in their judgment they did not always need the teacher's help in order to learn. Seventy-two percent of the students explicitly expressed confidence in themselves as independent learners.

Individualization is possible through PLAN* using several approaches. One approach is acceleration in which the student moves as quickly as he chooses and is able to. Another is the hierarchical model in which the student moves from a fixed instructional sequence with student's performance measured after each unit of instruction to determine whether or not he should proceed. In a third approach, instructional goals are individualized by allowing a student to choose teaching learning units according to his area of interest. Finally, the student is provided optional programs of instruction utilizing different learning styles which ultimately lead to the same concept attainment. Therefore, most or all of the students could indeed recognize themselves being involved in the same general activities, but would in fact be working in parallel learning situations with emphasis on individual concept attainment.

During the 1975-76 school year, the Iowa Tests of basic Skills was given during the first month of the school year. The test results were used as placement indicators rather than

assessment of achievement (interestingly enough, the former is the purpose of the ITBS). Further, much of the TLU's emphasize verbal communication and all testing is in written form. There will be no assessment of growth scores with reference to national norms. Assessment will be viewed in terms of the number of TLU's individuals and groups of students accomplish.

Affective. Teachers reported that there were major instructional responsibilities with their students that were different because of the Muncie PLAN*. They judged that the majority of teachers were more involved with the total life and development of the child due to the emphasis on one-to-one interaction and the relaxed learning environment stimulated by individualized approaches to learning. Teachers specifically stated that students were acquainted with alternatives as they developed their daily programs and learned to supplement their educational experiences by making wise choices. Administrators, teachers and pupils reported that students had visual access to the daily cooperation and interaction of the staff and teachers within the open framework and consequently, the student interaction was positively imitated in like manner.

The majority of both intermediate and primary teachers judged that because PLAN* was prescribing the learning environment, pupils' opportunities for self-expression and independent thinking were increasing. The majority of teachers also reported that students were involved in task-oriented activities to a greater extent because of PLAN*. It was judged that most of the students discretionary time was spent involved in

"free reading," and further, that PLAN* increased the amount of responsibility that pupils assumed for their own conduct.

When teachers were asked to name one thing they were doing to improve the self-concepts of the pupils, the responses included: complimenting students for specific helpful assistance, systematic and honest general compliments, using independent work where students can achieve, value clarification processes, work towards goals, sharing good things, and positive reinforcement for behavioral changes.

During 1974, students in grades four through six were asked to respond to the"How I Am At School--Self-Report"in order to provide data wherein estimations of self-concepts of learners could be established. A summary of some important data gathered in 1974 on self-concept is as follows: the majority of intermediate elementary students reported that they were not comfortable with their own voices, expressing that volume and clarity were problems to them; seventy-five percent of the students indicated that they did not reveal their feelings through facial expressions; the majority of the fourth, fifth and sixth grade pupils viewed themselves as having a good rapport with their peers some of the time; with reference to the learning environment, intermediate students judged themselves to have sufficient energy to be attentive to school tasks; the majority of students further reported being comfortable with handling objects and materials and doing their share of the work in task-oriented activities; the majority of the students reported being relaxed with their teacher some

of the time and that in general, the students reported trusting and respecting their teachers. Students reported being very hesitant about responding to humor in the classroom at any time.

During April of 1974, extensive systematic observations were made on pupils in grades four through six using The Observation of Group Self-Concept Schedule. It was observed that most or all of the students were not revealing feelings or emotions through facial expression. The noticeable exception to this statement was seen in the facial expressions of Black students within groups. There was little evidence of humor displayed by the students in general or response to attempts at humor by significant adult figures. One outstanding incident indicating such hesitancy was seen when teachers attempted to put on a humorous skit in the auditorium for the intermediate students. The students strained behavior indicated their uncomfortableness in an obvious attempt to not express their delight. Interaction between peers within the learning areas was described as limited. Students responded to each other on a casual basis and worked in a parallel manner as opposed to an interactive one. Approximately 25% of the students worked completely alone continually ignoring other pupils and were ignored by pupils.

It was observed that the majority of students were alternately attentive and inattentive to learning tasks. Many students applied their energies to individual tasks, and some students indicated feigning completion of assignments. A

high level of industry or enthusiasm for tasks was not consistently displayed by the majority of students. The majority of students moved around the classroom in an orderly manner without disturbing other students. Students used books and materials for their intended purposes and all students demonstrated some competency with using materials independently.

The majority of elementary students assumed individual responsibility in parallel work tasks. Upper elementary students were courteous to their teachers and initiated conversations with the teacher only when there was a purpose for doing so.

In interviews with primary pupils on components of self-concept, the majority of the younger pupils reported that they liked talking to their teachers and friends. The young pupils interpreted their teachers as always happy but always busy. Ninety-six percent of the primary pupils judged that if the teacher was describing him or her to a parent the teacher would give a report about the good work he or she had completed. Primary students judged that they enjoyed being in their classrooms, that there were things they liked to handle and further indicated they could play or work with other students or alone. When primary students were asked to site humorous incidents that occurred at school, almost all of the students reported situations where other students were frightened, hurt or in trouble.

Observation data was collected on the primary students through a modified Observation of Group Self-Concept Schedule (topics within indicators were attended to, but the polar adjectives were found not to be appropriate for students below the third grade). Primary student's facial expression gave little indication of feelings or emotions. Expressions on the majority of students' faces were blank most of the time. Very little humor was displayed within the learning areas. Students neither contributed to or responded to humor.

The majority of students were not enthusiastic about independent work and lacked industry in their efforts. Third grade students displayed some insecurity concerning pupil-teacher climate.

The primary students observed, maintained appropriate voice volume. They appeared to handle books and materials carefully and showed concern for keeping their study areas neat. Students were at ease handling objects in the classroom and were seen as working cooperatively in parallel situations.

Appendices 1 and 2 contain summaries of the data collected through self-report and observation schedules during the spring of 1975. One year later, specific indicators of change in the area of self-concept could be seen in the student responses of confidence in voice and appearance. Intermediate pupils as a whole reported that their interactions with their peers were happy, successful ones. Students further reported that they did things to make their peers

happy and enjoyed being with their peers. The intermediate pupils showed a further growth change in respecting and liking their teachers. Approximately twenty-five percent of the intermediate students who indicated respecting and depending on their teachers, reported that they were not relaxed when their teachers were near them. However, the majority of these same students judged that their classroom was a comfortable place to be most of the time.

Fifty percent of the intermediate students judged that posture was an asset to them in school. This had been previously indicated by few pupils. The data indicated an approximate fifty percent increase in students who reported responding to humor expressed by the teacher. Further, sixty to seventy-five percent of the pupils reported that they revealed their feelings through facial expression.

Observations made on the intermediate students supported their self-reports to a great extent. A noticeable change in students' self-presentation and posture took place during the course of the year. Visiting educators who were familiar with similar neighborhood schools often remarked about the difference in the self-presentation of these students in comparison to students of nearby schools. Trained observers noted more overt responses to humor within the learning environment. It was also noticed that incidents which involved personal embarrassment were taken the most spotlight in. As students involved in the embarrassing incidents often referred to them, it was deduced that pupils were laughing

with the situation rather than at the situation. Facial expressions of the intermediate students were masked, but to a lesser extent. Physical contact among students remained limited and was judged to be appropriate. Students were not seen hitting, tripping or bumping into other students in the learning areas or corridors in or out of the presence of significant adult figures.

During March of 1976, students in grades four, five and six responded to the "How I Am At School--Self Report." Significant growth in the self-concepts of students was seen in the areas of energy, attention, voice volume and clarity, facial expression, response to humor, recognition of contributions made to peers, and general rapport with teachers. Measurements in the affective areas often indicate change in behavior, but rarely indicate positive growth. Consequently, to evaluate data which indicates significant growth in self-concept within the learning environment is seen as an important contribution.

Community. In the spring of 1974, one hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed to parents of students in all grade levels. Of the one hundred and fifty distributed, fifty were completed and returned. Ninety-six percent of the parents reported that they talked to their child(ren) about school nearly every day. Sixty percent of the parents stated that they had visited the school at least three times during the year. Fifty percent of the parents in 1974 reported that they had read all or most of the materials on the Muncie PLAN* that had been sent home, and further had attended all or most of the meetings the school had held to explain the new program. Forty-six percent of the parents stated that they had not attended the meetings but had read the literature. However, forty-six percent of the same parents reported that they would like to know more about the program than what they had learned. Ninety-one percent of the parents reported that they had attended both parent/teacher conferences during the year. Ninety-three percent of the parents stated that during the conferences, the teachers told them all or most of what they wanted to know about their child(ren)'s work. One hundred percent of the parents judged that they had a general or accurate picture of how well their child(ren) was doing. Fifty-five percent of the parents were satisfied with the performance of their child(ren) and forty-three percent of parents expressed a desire to see their child(ren) perform at a higher level. Seventy-nine percent of the parents judged that their child(ren) was usually or always

enthusiastic about school and the remaining nineteen percent stated that enthusiasm was prevelant at least part of the time. In the spring of 1974, seventy-three percent of the parents wanted their child(ren) to remain in the Muncie PLAN*. Twenty-one percent of the parents preferred that their child(ren) attend a school without the Muncie PLAN*.

During the first year of the Muncie PLAN*, project personnel found that immediate tasks within direct relationship to the program involved their full energies. Consequently, the community was not involved extensively. The attempt at dissemination of information was not as successful as it needed to be in order to reduce the parental anxiety brought about by fear of the unknown and different. Primarily, an Appalachian community, the aforementioned statement expressed a major characteristic stumbling block to community involvement and parental decision-making.

In 1975, two hundred questionnaires were distributed to parents of students in all grade levels. Of the two hundred distributed, fifty were completed and returned. Ninety-eight percent of the parents reported that they often talked with their child(ren) about school. Eighty-six percent of the parents reported that they had visited the school at least two times during the year. Thirty-eight percent of the parents judged that they knew what the Muncie PLAN* was and knew how it worked. Fourteen percent of the parents reported knowing about, but not understanding the program. In 1975, forty-six percent of the parents reported that they did not

know what the Muncie PLAN* was. Ninety-six percent of the parents reported that their child(ren)'s teacher kept them informed about progress made in school. Ninety-two percent of the parents reported that the parent/teacher conferences provided them with a general or accurate picture of how well their child(ren) was doing in school. Ninety-six percent of the parents stated that they were satisfied with the way their child(ren) was treated by teachers and school personnel. Ninety-two percent of the parents in 1975, preferred that their child(ren) remain in the Muncie PLAN*. This indicated an approximate twenty percent gain in parental approval of the program over a period of a year.

Professional visitors were also queried as to the extent they could identify pupil behaviors that were as the result of the implementation of the Muncie PLAN*. In 1974, professional visitors judged that the cognitive and affective objectives were being met to a high degree. In 1975, professional visitors reported that the concepts of openness and team-teaching were being successfully practiced. The observations over a period of a year made by professional visitors indicated that the learning environment was meaningful to pupils; pupils were assuming responsibility for their learning; a healthy social environment was promoted within learning situations; pupils were exhibiting satisfaction with their accomplishments; and for the most part, students were involved in subject-oriented tasks.

Conclusions

Cognitive growth can be reported in terms of three reference points:

1. The mean gain by the Muncie PLAN* pupils surpassed major test author's expectations in both the 1974 and 1975 school years.

2. The mean gain by the Muncie PLAN* pupils met the program objective of achieving one year's growth, but failed to meet the objective of increasing the percentage of pupils scoring above the fiftieth percentile by 25%.

3. The general goal of education in promoting equal opportunity to succeed remained stable, to say the least.

Affective growth was judged to have taken place through the demonstration of an increasing number of positive self-concepts as reported by pupils, projected by teachers and observed by pairs of raters. Change in the social behavior of the pupils was evident through the daily transactions of pupils complimenting each other's work, assisting each other in the instructional process, and attempting to maintain environmental orderliness. It was further noticeable to project evaluators, administrators and professional visitors, that in comparison to elementary schools in nearby neighborhoods there was a considerable lack of abusive verbal and physical interaction.

In the realm of community decision-making it became evident that after a year's time an increasing number of parents were supportive of the new program. Some parents stated that

they became aware of positive behavioral changes in their child(ren) at home as well as at school. As parents were given information about and understood PLAN* to a greater extent, they appeared to incorporate a vocabulary which allowed them to more readily formulate questions concerning the program and their child(ren)'s participation in it. Parents were never involved in decision-making activities which would have established or modified program objectives.

Teachers and students could opt out of the program. During the first two years, less than one-half of one percent of the students withdrew from the program. It was the judgment of the building administration that nearly all of those withdrawals were due to racial issues rather than curricular ones. By the end of the first two years of the program, teacher mortality had reached sixty-six percent of the original eighteen teachers. These losses were specifically due to: employment outside of education for purposes of higher salary, transfer of family to other community, death, request for transfer to other buildings, removal from immediate program by administrators, and pursuing doctoral degrees.

Evaluation of the data gathered and observations of teachers in action strongly indicated that: (1) teachers did not receive sufficient in-service prior to implementing the Muncie PLAN* and further did not receive assistance from Westinghouse which met their stated needs once the program was underway, (2) the task of teaching within PLAN* consumed energy and time that was sorely underestimated by central office

administrators who directly effected release and planning time. During the first two years of the program, thirty to forty percent of the teachers remained in the building working at curricular-oriented tasks from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. The teachers stated that unless a gross amount of time was spent on a day-to-day basis it was impossible to function.

The initial funding of the Muncie PLAN* provided materials and equipment that would have otherwise been unavailable to the school. Students had access to and readily used equipment that was made available to them. At the end of the first year, teachers indicated through little use of the equipment, that insufficient media in-service had been provided. The major cost of program implementation involved the computer system. Full use of the computer was never realized. Although teachers were supportive of all other components of the program, the teachers insisted that the computer was not helpful and indeed caused more work. At the end of two years, percent of computer time was cut back.

The evaluation component fo the Muncie PLAN* was thorough. It was recommended that criterion-referenced tests be used for achievement purposes, and that oral testing be considered. Although this recommendation was not accepted by the central office administration in charge of that decision, the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills will be used in the future as an indicator of placement rather than for achievement purposes.

An attempt to include in-service as a component of the

evaluation process in the affective area was made to the extent that time and finances allowed.

The participating pupils within the Muncie PLAN* had many of the problem-oriented characteristics of low socio-economic groups. The adjustment those pupils made by the end of the second year and third year to an open, cooperative and creative learning climate was in direct conflict to projected behaviors by educators throughout the community. No attempt was made to make the Muncie PLAN* available to pupils with other social, economic or racial characteristics.

Implications

With reference to the above conclusions and supporting evidence that the Muncie PLAN* made an unprecedented contribution to the school community, it is implied that PLAN* could exist as a viable alternative school. Its existence would hinge upon more thorough in-service for participating educators by Westinghouse Learning Corporation, as well as an inclusion of prescribed oral and written measurements for the purpose of assessing cognitive growth derived from PLAN* promoted experiences. A more realistic comprehension of the teaching task upon the part of central office administration would be necessary as would a systematic design to include parents in the decision-making process.

It is suggested that PLAN*, for the most part, meets the criteria of being a viable alternative school. Inspite of the evidence that students are learning, exhibiting positive

behaviroal changes and expressing interest in school, PLAN* will become, unfortuantely, a fad of the seventies.

FOOTNOTES

1. This evaluation research was carried out as a requirement of ESEA, Title III Funding. James H. McElhinney, Ball State University and Pamela J. Eckard, The University of Texas at San Antonio were the principal evaluators.

2. The "Observation of Group Self-Concept Schedule" and the "How I Am At School--Self-Report" were designed and validated as a part of the major author's doctoral dissertation (see Dissertation Abstracts, 1975).

3. John Wean, Principal of Washington-Carver Elementary School, Muncie, Indiana has been the primary source of support, encouragement and enthusiasm for continuation of the Muncie PLAN*. His creative and intelligent administration has served as a foundation for the successful experiences of the pupils.

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